

**Legislative Testimony
Appropriations Committee
Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments
HB 5037 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30,
2023
February 23, 2022**

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Dr. Mimi DeLessio-Matta. I am a Pediatric Dentist with my office in Southbury, CT and I am the current President of the Connecticut State Dental Association. I have been a Medicaid provider in this state for 26 years.

During my time as a practice owner in Connecticut, I was fortunate to see an increase in Dental Medicaid fees in 2008 allowing Connecticut to be second in the nation for access to dental care. Now, I am writing in regards to the Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments for the Department of Social Services and the proposed increase to adult dental Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Although I am a pediatric dentist, I also treat adult patients with special needs. Patients with intellectual disabilities can only withstand treatment if they are seen in the operating room under general anesthesia. General anesthesia is safe in a hospital setting with an anesthesiologist, but it is prudent fiscally and medically, to complete all needed dental work at a single visit. These cases often take 3-4 hours where I can restore between 20-30 teeth. Medicaid pays a limited amount compared to my fees so when these cases are completed, I only get reimbursed a quarter of what it costs me to do treatment. Since the pandemic, all of my supplies and PPE cost considerably more. At the current rate, I lose money treating these patients and am finding it unsustainable.

In order to retain a robust dental care safety net, adult dental Medicaid fees need to be increased to at least the same as the pediatric rates. This would help more patients receive the treatment they deserve and allow Connecticut to remain a leader in oral health care nationwide.

I thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Respectfully Submitted,

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